

LINCOLN'S VISIT TO McCLELLAN'S HEADQUARTERS AFTER THE BATTLE OF ANTIETAM IN 1862

(From the original photograph loaned by the Lincoln Museum)

## THE LINCOLN MUSEUM AT WASHINGTON

THE REMARKABLE COLLECTION OF LINCOLN RELICS, PORTRAITS AND DOCUMENTS NOW PRESERVED IN THE HOUSE IN WHICH THE MARTYRED PRESIDENT BREATHED HIS LAST

By Dr. Thomas Calver

*(With illustrations from photographs furnished by Osborn R. Oldroyd, collector and custodian of the museum.)*

ONE must have lived in the western country just before the sixties—that is, during the political campaign that made Abraham Lincoln president of the United States, and through the dread years of civil war that finally led to his assassination—to know how deeply the admiration and love of the martyred president's ability, character and personality had sunk in the hearts of the western people. Lincoln was a model of their type, their prophet and their leader, and they were proud to

think that he was one of themselves, plain, rugged, unpretentious, accustomed to toil, privations and discomforts, and who nevertheless had achieved greatness, not only in the eyes of the nation, but in the eyes of the whole world.

In April, 1865, the writer of this sketch was living in Iowa City, Ia., as the junior member of the faculty of the Iowa State University, having but a short time before returned disabled from service in the western army, to live among former friends and neighbors of the man at the helm of State,

## ABRAHAM LINCOLN

By DR. THOMAS CALVER

**A**S some great oak that lifts its rugged form  
And spreads its arms upon the mountain's crest,  
Withstands the fury of the fiercest storm  
While huddled flocks beneath its shelter rest;  
And then, while sunshine gilds the scenes around,  
By lightning lurking in a passing cloud  
Its heart is cleft from top to parent ground,  
Its robe of verdure burnt to rusty shroud:

So Lincoln stood through War's tempestuous time,  
His country's honor sheltered in his heart,  
Upon the nation's heights, unswerved, sublime;  
For lofty deeds by Heaven set apart;  
Then as he saw the angry clouds retire,  
His trust yet safely to his bosom borne,  
There fell the baneful stroke, with mission dire,  
That left a nation's soul with anguish torn.

The pathos of the gaunt and towering frame,  
The modest ways, the martyr's mournful eyes,  
Might well have filled the blackest heart with shame,  
Ere it could bid the smiting hand to rise;  
The witchery of the pathetic smile,  
That told the story of the burdened mind,  
In reason's light had failed not to beguile  
The morbid murderer to mood more kind.

The mountain path to danger often treads,  
For cruel envy loves a lofty mark.  
The name revered alike by foes and friends,  
May stir the ire of minds with madness dark,  
Until they reck not what their spleen may bring  
Of evil to the welfare of the state;  
Nor care they, as the weapon strikes the king,  
How great the fall, if but the fall be great.

Immortal Lincoln! For his strength above  
The nation's needs, be his the nation's praise;  
But yet it is his weaker side we love,  
His sweet humanity and simple ways;  
And though that strength of soul and nerve and mind  
A nation saved and calmed a nation's fears,  
In his great heart and tender eyes we find  
The charm that yet brings forth a nation's tears.

who was so successfully steering the bark consigned to his care through terrific storms and over angry billows of trouble toward the haven of glory and peace.

On the morning of April 16 the sun arose over that beautiful western country, just breaking forth from the sterile grasp of winter, in the glad verdure and lovely flowers of spring, with apparently more than its usual warmth and brightness, gilding the golden bells of the forsythia bushes with yet brighter gold, giving richer colors and sweeter fragrance to woodland and meadow flowers, and touching the feathered songsters with the spirit of song until the balmy southern breeze was laden with melody.

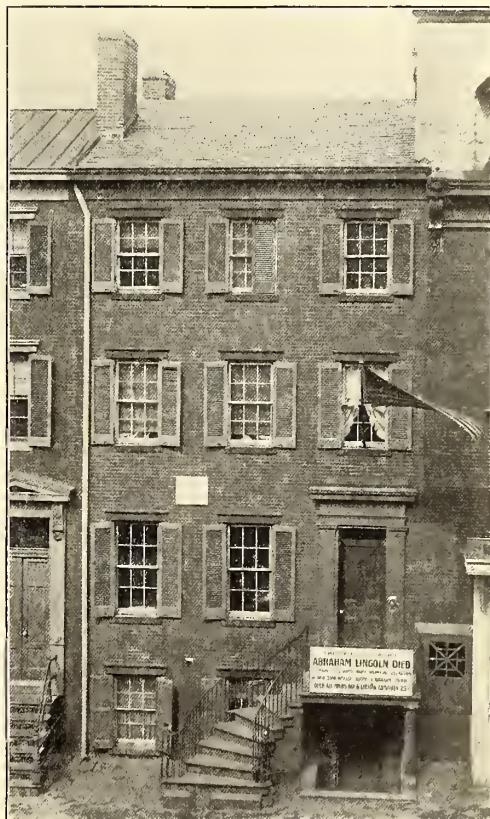
The glad tidings that the war was practically over; that the blessings of peace were about to be restored to a reunited country, and that the soldier boys were soon to return to the outstretched arms of their eagerly waiting mothers, sisters, wives and sweethearts, had just rung joyously through the land, and that glorious Sunday morning seemed filled with happiness as we went to church in common with millions of our fellow countrymen, to give thanks for the many bountiful gifts of a kind Providence.

The minister, the choir and the congregation all seemed filled with happiness that morning. The music was ringing and joyous, the sermon was full of gladness, and the listeners seemed to appreciate and enter into the spirit of both. Just as the sermon was completed the sexton of the church walked rapidly up the aisle to the pulpit and delivered to the minister a written message which had been delivered to him at the door by a messenger who had brought it that morning by horse and buggy from Muscatine, about thirty miles away, over the prairie, and the then nearest telegraph station.

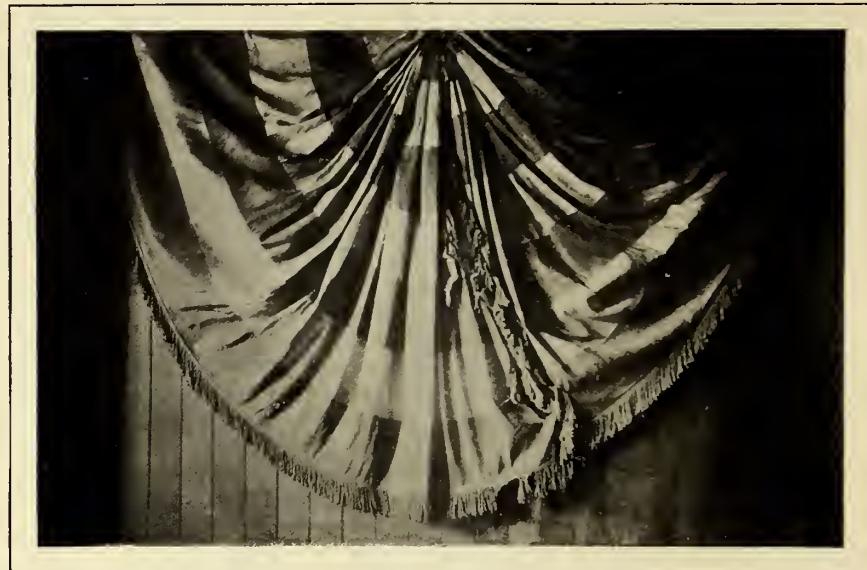
On reading the message the color quickly faded from the minister's face and he arose, trembling, and in a few choking words announced to the congregation that the President had been

shot the preceding Friday night and had died the next morning. A gasp, a sob and a smothered wail seemed to break forth simultaneously from each one of the large congregation, who were hurriedly dismissed by the minister with a brief prayer and benediction, the tones of which were barely heard by the throbbing and weeping listeners. In an incredibly short time the whole town was in mourning. As if the elements were in sympathy with the people, the sky became overcast with black, lowering clouds, obscuring the smiling sun; the wind came from over the prairie in gusts that seemed like sobbing and wailing, and with the following rain the day, which began so happily, ended in tears.

It was with recollections of that day,



THE HOUSE IN WHICH LINCOLN DIED  
Now the Lincoln Museum



THE FLAG THAT DECORATED LINCOLN'S THEATER BOX THE NIGHT HE  
WAS ASSASSINATED

In one corner is the rent made by the assassin's spur as he jumped from the box to the stage transformed for so many people from a day of joy and gladness to one of grief and horror, never to be forgotten, that the writer recently made a visit to the Lincoln Museum in Washington, which, though started as a private collection, has now been taken up by the government and rearranged and improved by additions of space and more relics of the great and good man, the memory of whose personality, busy, useful life and sad death is here sought to be perpetuated. Leaving the street railway on F street, at the corner of Tenth, west, we walk down Tenth street a few steps and find ourselves at the house where the first of our presidents to meet with death by violence breathed his last. It is a modest two story and basement brick building, with high steps leading to the front door on the main floor, and on the north side of the steps there hangs a painted sign, which reads:

Abraham Lincoln died in this house  
22 minutes past seven A. M.,  
April 15, 1865.

Ascending the steps we ring the

doorbell and are admitted to the hall, which leads to the back rooms and the stairs reaching to the second story. The walls of this hall are literally covered with portraits of Lincoln at various times of his life, in steel engraving, lithograph and photograph, and the same kind of pictures of groups of which he is the central figure. There are in this hall and the several rooms 286 portraits, besides the groups.

A careful scrutiny of each of these portraits discloses the same sad, patient, waiting face, with a quaint but touching humor lurking about the corners of the mouth and eyes.

Entering the front room, to the left of the hall, we meet Mr. Osborn H. Oldroyd, the enthusiastic collector and custodian of the priceless relics. The collection has been his life work for the past forty years, he having begun it in 1860, when a very young man, then a newsdealer in a small way at Mount Vernon, O.

Mr. Oldroyd is a born collector, as well as naturalist. He has now in his possession a collection of insects and

snakes, gathered by him when a boy, but as he grew older he became fascinated by the character and achievements of Abraham Lincoln as those of the typical citizen of the great West, in which his childhood had been spent, Ohio being then considered a western State. This fascination seems to have grown upon him, and during the political campaign of 1860 he was devoting all his spare moments to the collection of cartoons and newspaper items of interest pertaining to the man who was foremost of all American citizens in his youthful mind. This was the foundation of the collection. After the election of Lincoln to the Presidency the young collector seems to have increased his efforts to gather items and pictures concerning his hero from the papers and magazines, and this work he continued, as far as his opportunities afforded, during the four years of his service in the Union army from 1861 to 1865. The assassination of the object of his adoration swept away from him all other ambition, and confirmed his passion for the work to which his subsequent life has been devoted, the fruits of which the public at large are but just beginning to appreciate and enjoy.

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**Friday Evening, April 14th, 1865**

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— AND —  
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Mr. Coggs. — W. J. FREDON  
Lieutenant Vernon S. K. — C. BYRNES  
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Bull. — J. L. DORR  
John Whisker. — V. COOKLEY  
Rapier. — C. BYRNES  
Ball. — O. A. FARRELL and L. JOHNSON  
May Trenchard. — M. DOUGLASS  
Mrs. M. M. Hart. — Miss H. TRUMAN  
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Haller. — Miss M. DOOKLEY

SATURDAY EVENING, APRIL 15,  
**BENEFIT of Miss JENNIE GOURLAY**  
Who will be presented BOURGAULT'S Great Sensational Drama,  
**THE OCTOOROON**  
 Easter Monday, April 17, Engagement of the YOUNG AMERICAN TRAGEDIAN,  
**EDWIN ADAMS**  
FOR TWELVE NIGHTS ONLY

THE PRICES OF ADMISSION:  
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REPRODUCTION OF THE THEATER PROGRAM OF THE  
NIGHT LINCOLN  
WAS SHOT

Being in Springfield, Ill., in 1883, he found the Lincoln homestead empty, the house and grounds in a dilapidated condition, the fence broken down, and the wall which sustained it falling to pieces. This was an opportunity he had often longed for but never expected to find, and as soon as practicable he rented the place, put the house in shape, restored the grounds to their former neatness, repaired the wall and built a new fence upon it. He then moved his family household property and his Lincoln collection into the house, including many relics he had succeeded in collecting at Springfield, and, as a matter of sentiment only, converted the front and back parlors and the room over the front parlor into a Lincoln museum, having his pictures on the walls, placing the furniture around the rooms and securing the other relics in glass cases where then could readily be seen.

For five years Mr. Oldroyd occupied the Lincoln mansion as the tenant of the owner, Mr. Robert T. Lincoln, and then the latter presented the property to the State of Illinois, the State Legislature passing a bill assuming charge of the place and providing for a board of trustees, whose duty



THE  
CHAIR IN  
WHICH  
LINCOLN  
SAT

WHEN  
HE WROTE  
HIS  
INAUGURAL  
ADDRESS

it became to provide for its care and protection. The enthusiastic collector was appointed by this board as custodian of the property, and the museum, which had been enlarged by purchase and donation of relics, was thrown open to the public. For five years he and the museum remained at Springfield, when a change in governor resulted in the custodian's losing his place and another being appointed. The visitors' book to this time indicated that over 83,000 visitors had been received.

Packing up the collection, Mr. Oldroyd stored it in temporary quarters, and soon afterward received from the Memorial Association of the District

of Columbia an invitation to bring it to Washington and place it in the house in which Lincoln died. They engaged to secure the property for him and his valuable possessions rent free, and to endeavor to induce the government to purchase the building as a permanent home for the museum. This invitation was accepted, and here the collection came, the association paying the rent to the owner and allowing Mr. Oldroyd a small salary, pending action by Congress in the matter, the museum being opened free to the public. The rent paid by the association at first was \$2,000 a year, but as action by Congress, looking to the purchase of the property, was delayed, the expense to

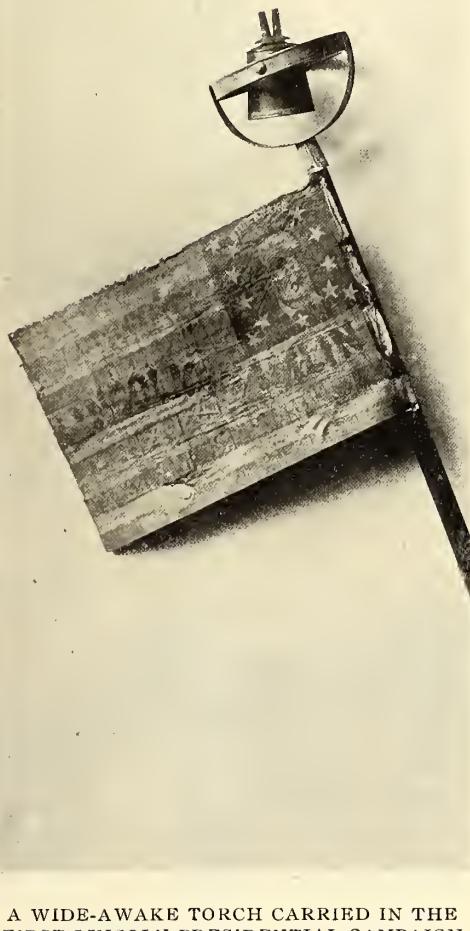
them in the meantime being considerable, a reduction of the rent to \$1,500 a year was secured, and as the flight of years indicated that no Congressional action was probable, the Memorial Association abandoned the collector to his own resources.

Mr. Oldroyd then secured the building at a rental of \$100 a month and charged an admission fee of twenty-five cents, but, receipts being entirely insufficient to meet the expenses, the building was about to be abandoned when the Memorial Association renewed its efforts with Congress under more favorable auspices, and an act was passed in 1897 providing for the purchase of the property at a cost of \$30,000 and repairs at \$1,000. The latter appropriation being found insufficient by the Engineer Department of the Army, having charge of the property under the act, a further appropriation of \$3,383 was obtained, and in 1898 the repairs were made by that department under the direction of Col. Wilson, superintendent of public buildings and grounds.

This house being now owned by the government, the owner of the collection pays no rent, but, as no provision

for the salary of a custodian was made by Congress, the cost of lighting, fuel and the care of the collection must be provided by himself, and hence the necessity of the charge of an admission fee. It is proposed that Congress provide for him a reasonable salary as custodian of the house and museum, the latter to become the property of the government at his death, and that he give his entire time to the reception of visitors, the care and increase of the collection, and that the museum be opened free to the public. It is gratifying to learn that such action is expected of the present Congress.

This house, at the time of Lincoln's death, was owned and occupied by a family by the name of Peterson, who here conducted a boarding house. They sold it to Mr. Schade, owner and editor of the *Washington Sentinel*, who here published his paper until he rented the house to the Memorial Association, and from whom the purchase was made by the government. It was one of Mr. Peterson's boarders who, upon hearing a great commotion in the street the night of the assassination, went to the front door, and upon being told that Mr. Lincoln had



A WIDE-AWAKE TORCH CARRIED IN THE FIRST LINCOLN PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN

been shot, and seeing him being carried across the street from Ford's Theater, just opposite, told the men to bring him in, which they did, taking him down the hall to a rear room, where he was laid on the bed upon which he subsequently died.

Having learned the history of the collection and its domicile we proceed to a personal examination of both, with the assistance of the collector. Here in the front room in a frame, enclosed with glass, is the flag which draped the theater box in which the President was shot and in which Booth's spur caught as he jumped from the box upon the stage, causing him a fall which broke his leg and undoubtedly led to his early capture and death. The rent made by the spur can be plainly seen near one corner of the flag. In this room are also a black locust rail, split by Mr. Lincoln in 1830, taken from the fence which surrounded his father's house, and sent to Springfield, where it was carried in political processions, and which was also borne, draped with mourning crêpe, by two of his friends at his funeral; the spur

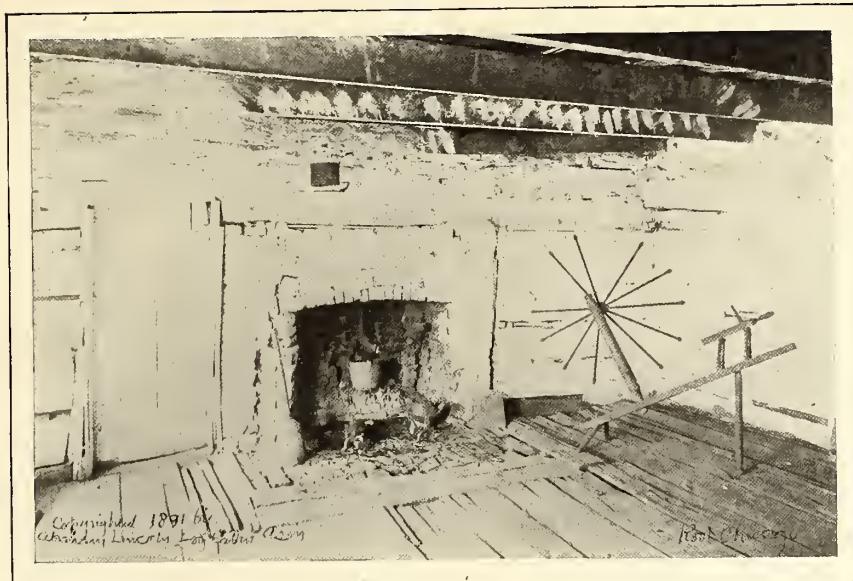
worn by Booth the night of the assassination; a "Wide Awake" torch, carried by one of Lincoln's neighbors in the campaign of 1860, and Lincoln's mother's family bible, nearly 100 years old.

On the walls hang an oil painting of Mr. Lincoln, made in 1842; several other portraits of Mr. Lincoln and groups of which he was one, including the President and his Cabinet; Lincoln studying at night by the firelight on the hearth of his father's log cabin; his last reception and other receptions at the White House; corrected draft of Lincoln's Gettysburg speech; scenes in Springfield, Ill., including Oak Ridge Cemetery, where the Lincoln monument stands; the old Globe Tavern, where Lincoln boarded when he was a rising young lawyer and where his son Robert was born; the proclamation of freedom, January 1, 1863; scenes the night of the assassination and places connected with the capture of Booth; a large photograph of the log cabin built by Lincoln and his father, in 1831, on Goose Nest Prairie, near Farmington,



HOUSE BUILT BY LINCOLN AND HIS FATHER, IN WHICH HIS FATHER AND MOTHER DIED

(Copyright, 1891, by Lincoln Log Cabin Association)



INTERIOR OF LINCOLN'S LOG CABIN

(Copyright, 1891, by Lincoln Log Cabin Association)

Ill., in which his father died in 1851, and in which his mother also died during his first term as President; pictures representing Lincoln's journey from Springfield to Washington, to be inaugurated, in 1861, and many other interesting paintings, lithographs, wood and steel engravings and photographs, among the latter being those of several members of the family, including Dennis Hanks, son of a brother of Lincoln's mother, Nancy Hanks. Dennis was born May 15, 1799, taught his cousin, Abraham, born February 12, 1809, the alphabet, reading, writing and spelling in 1817, and was living in 1891 at the age of ninety-two years.

Here are also two candlesticks and two vases, presented by Mr. Lincoln to Caleb B. Smith, his Secretary of the Interior, very recently purchased from a niece of the latter by Mr. Oldroyd. In various glass cases are many valuable mementos, including a lock of Mrs. Lincoln's hair; autograph letters and cards of Abraham Lincoln; the key of the old prison, in which the conspirators were confined; a lock of

Booth's hair; a piece of Booth's crutch; a piece of the burnt barn in which he was shot; a piece of the porch on which he died, and pieces of the ropes by which the conspirators were hanged. On pedestals are statuettes of Lincoln and Douglas, made in 1860, and in a frame is a business card of Lincoln's, which reads:

A. LINCOLN,  
ATTORNEY AND COUNSELLOR AT LAW,  
SPRINGFIELD, ILL.  
*To whom it may concern;*

My old customers and others are no doubt aware of the terrible time I have had *in crossing the stream*, and will be glad to know that I will be back on the same side from which I started, on or before the *4th of March next*, when I will be ready to *Swap Horses, Dispense Law, Make Jokes, Split Rails* and perform other matters in a *small way*.

In the back parlor stands a large bronze easel, on which rests a massive bronze frame surrounding a water color painting of a female figure

representing the Argentine Republic, with the flag of that republic in her right hand, the left supporting a shield draped with the Stars and Stripes, on which shield is painted the act of the Argentine Congress, passed upon hearing of Lincoln's death, which directed that this body should be in mourning for three days, during which the national flag should be at half mast, and that the President of the Congress should address a letter of condolence to the President of the United States. This beautiful token was presented to Oldroyd's collection, with elaborate ceremonies, by the Argentine Legation in Washington, as a tribute of the Argentine people to the memory of the immortal Lincoln. Here are also original photographs of the execution of the conspirators and of scenes connected with the assassination, the flight of Booth and Harold and the arrest and trial of the conspirators; also a bust of Mr. Lincoln, made in 1860 by Leonard W. Volk, of Chicago, and presented by the artist to this collection; a bust made from life in the winter of 1861 by T. D. Jones, whom Lincoln facetiously named his "mud man," which name stuck to him throughout his life; medallions and busts of Lincoln; fractional currency and revenue stamps used during his administration; lithographic cartoons of the political campaign of 1860; scenes representing the first inauguration of Lincoln, with the capitol in an unfinished condition and without any dome; the original poster of the War Department offering \$100,000 for the capture of the assassins; original theater bills of Ford's Theatre the night of the assassination; life mask and death mask of Lincoln, and casts of his hands made by Leonard W. Volk, now securely enclosed in glass cases.

Re-entering the hall, we go to the room in the rear, in which Lincoln died. This room has been preserved just as it was, even to paper on the walls and ceiling. Here are many pictures representing the death bed scene, including a large crayon, giving

correct portraits of the distinguished men of that day, then in Washington, who were supposed to be present, and showing Mrs. Lincoln kneeling by the bedside, which picture is said to be not all historically correct, as most of these persons, including Mrs. Lincoln, were not there at the time of the President's death.

In this room are also the eagle that was a part of the Lincoln catafalque, and the marble that covered the crypt containing the remains of Mr. Lincoln in the national monument at Springfield, Ill., with oval opening covered with heavy plate glass, and which was removed when Lincoln's body was buried under the monument, where it now reposes. Here is also the telegraphic dispatch sent out from the War Department, 7:30 A. M., April 15, 1865, announcing Mr. Lincoln's death, eight minutes after it occurred, addressed to General Dix, New York, by whom it was repeated all over the country; also many scenes and relics connected with Lincoln's funeral, including badges worn on that occasion; pieces of the dais covering on which the remains rested while lying in state in Springfield; pieces of the cloth covering of the catafalque; a cross and anchor which rested on the coffin; the dried and discolored leaves of a rose which lay in his breast while lying in state in Chicago; seventy pieces of music, including songs, dirges and funeral marches, published soon after his death; ribbons and velvet from the catafalque; wreaths that were on the coffin, and a photograph of the Congressional delegation attending the funeral, in front of the Lincoln homestead at Springfield. In this room are also several photographs and engravings of the Lincoln homestead; the candle by which the plaster was heated to spread on linen when the wound was dressed by the surgeon, and the knife used to spread it, and many other articles of interest too numerous to mention.

Back of this most noted room is the servants' room, which is now the libra-

ry, containing over 1,000 volumes of biographies of Lincoln, and books relating to the Civil War, 500 newspapers, and 320 magazines containing articles relating to Lincoln; 3,500 newspaper clippings, hundreds of printed and manuscript sermons delivered at the time of the funeral, and many books, papers and pamphlets that belonged to Mr. Lincoln.

There are also framed copies of the Gettysburg speech, the emancipation proclamation, joint resolutions of Congress submitting to the legislatures of the several States the proposed XIIIth amendment to the constitution, and several letters written by Mr. Lincoln, the most touching being one dated at the Executive Mansion, November 21, 1864, and addressed to Mrs. Rixby, Boston, Mass., which is as follows:

"DEAR MADAM: I have been shown on the file of the War Department a statement of the Adjutant General of Massachusetts that you are the mother of five sons, who have died gloriously on the field of battle. I feel how weak and fruitless must be any word of mine which should attempt to beguile you from the grief of a loss so overwhelming; but I cannot refrain from tendering to you the consolation that may be found in the thanks of the republic they died to save.

"I pray that our Heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom."

Back of the library is a room which has recently been added to the building, and which contains some of the most interesting relics in the collection, among which are the following: The cooking stove used in the Lincoln homestead up to the time the family left for Washington; a stand made from a sill of the house in which Mr. Lincoln lived in 1834, with a black marble top, on which are graven lines written expressly for it by John G. Whittier:

"Let man be free! The mighty word  
He spake was not his own;  
The spirit of the highest stirred  
His mortal lips alone."

A walnut cradle in which the younger children of Mr. Lincoln were rocked to sleep, and often by the hand of their illustrious father. Black hair-cloth sofas and chairs, which were bought and used by Mr. Lincoln at Springfield, and sold by him when he came to Washington. A what-not made from a walnut bedstead, presented by Mr. Lincoln to a friend when he left Springfield. Wheel from the family carriage. The desk and office chair used by Mr. Lincoln in Springfield. Wooden dining room chairs, with flowers painted on their backs. A wooden settee, which stood on the porch of the homestead, on which Mr. Lincoln often reclined and hailed his neighbors as they passed. John Rodgers' statuette of Lincoln, Grant and Stanton. Case containing many engraved and photographic portraits of Mr. Lincoln. Large photograph by Brady. Photograph of Lincoln, Hay and Nicolay. Photograph of Lincoln and Tad looking at a photograph album, sometimes described as a Bible. Flag inscribed "Lincoln and Hamlin," borne in the political procession of 1860. Case containing 371 gold, silver, bronze and white metal medals bearing the face of Mr. Lincoln in bas relief, many of which are extremely rare and of great historical value.

A collection like this must be seen to be appreciated, and it is not practicable to name all of even the most interesting curios in an article like this. It is believed, however, that enough of the relics have been described to show the worth of this collection, which is wonderfully complete considering the loss of the largest part of the personal belongings of Mr. Lincoln in the great Chicago fire. It is hoped that Congress will take the necessary steps to secure the collection as the property of the nation and to preserve it for future generations, to whom it will be invaluable, and to add to it any further relics connected with the life and death of the immortal President.

